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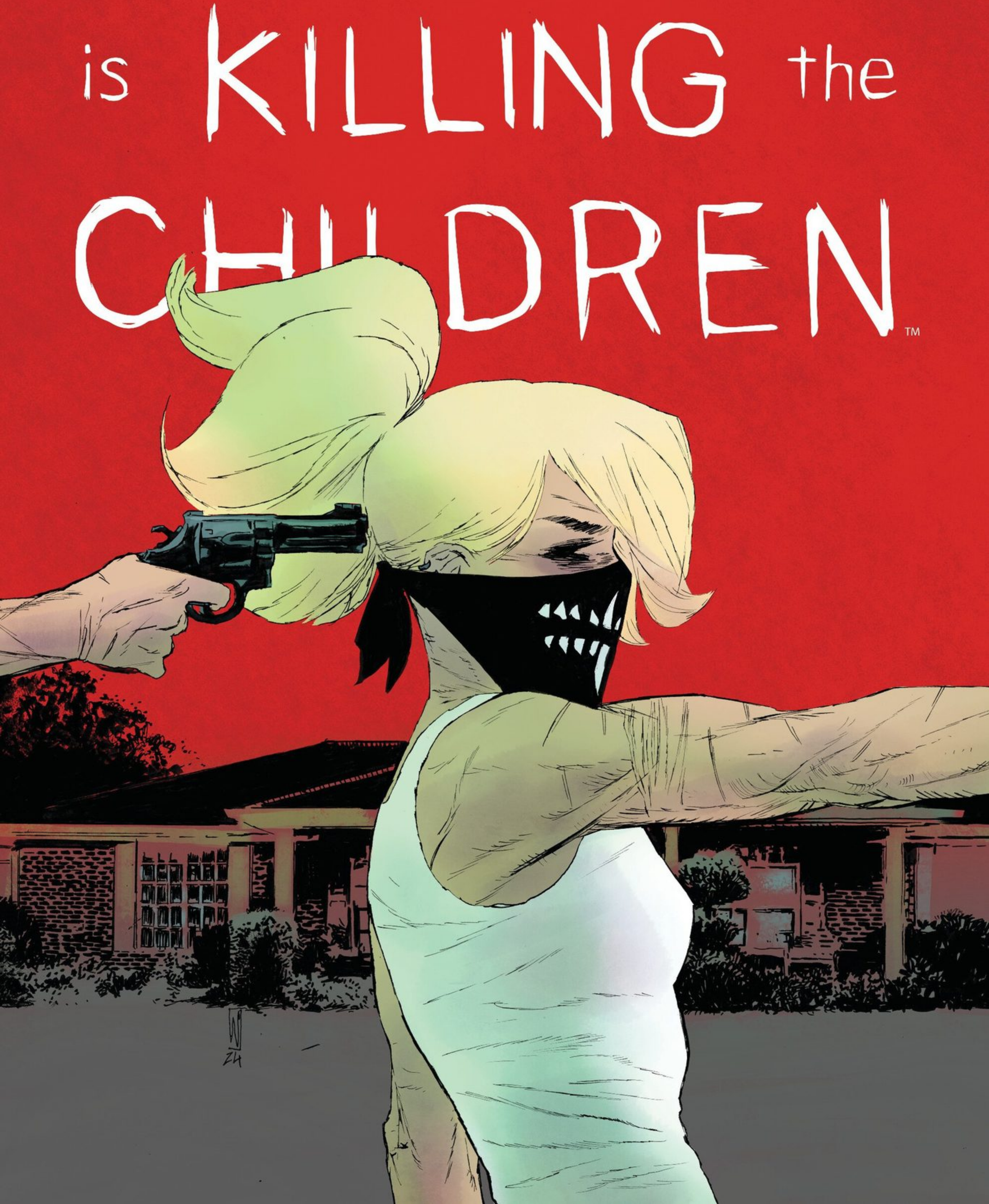
JAMES TYNION IV

WERTHER DELL'EDERA

MIQUEL MUERTO

Nº 40

SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN™



CLACK

I DON'T GET WHY I HAVE TO DO THIS.

IT'S PART OF YOUR TRAINING. I'M TRAINING YOU.

WE CAN DO IT THE BORING WAY ON THE FARM IF YOU WANT. GET ALL THE SHITTY LITTLE ***WHITE MASKS*** LOOKING OVER YOUR SHOULDER ON THE RANGE.

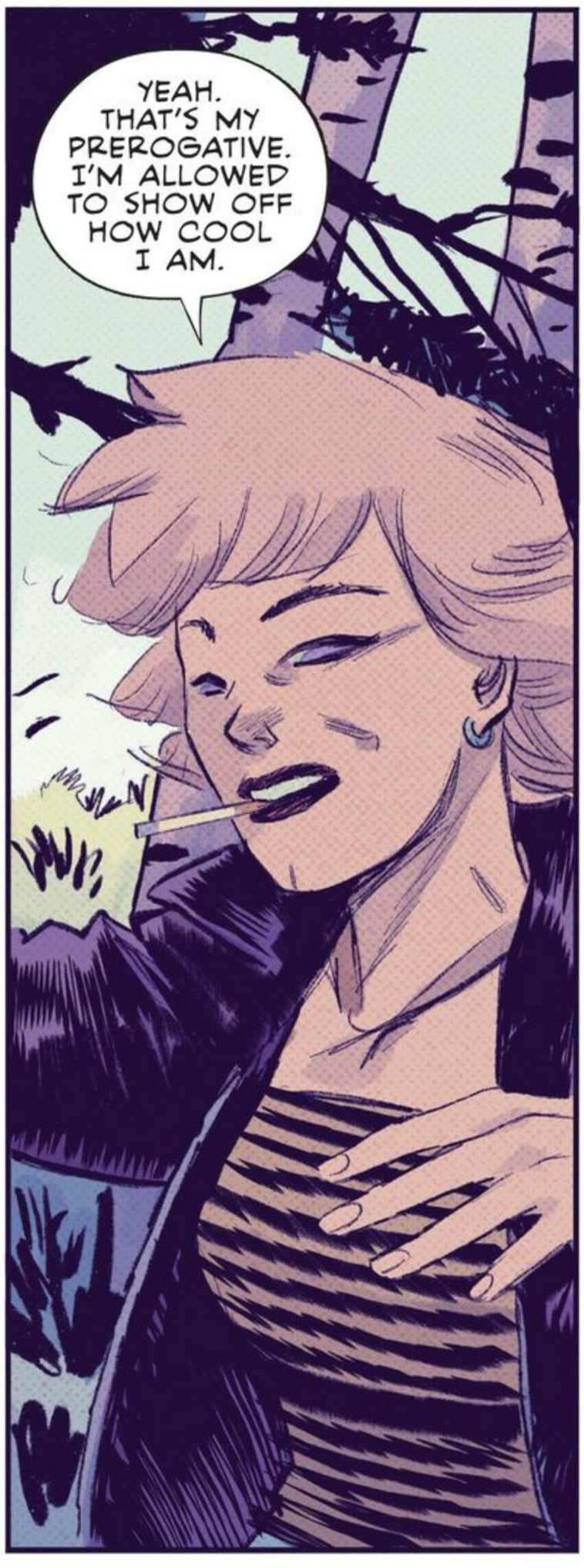
C'MON, IT'S A ***LITTLE*** FUN, RIGHT?

NO.

IT ***ABSOLUTELY*** IS A LITTLE FUN.

HERE. LET ME.

YOU JUST WANTED TO SHOW OFF.


YEAH. THAT'S MY PREROGATIVE. I'M ALLOWED TO SHOW OFF HOW COOL I AM.

I'LL BE FINE WITH OTHER STUFF. I LIKE KNIVES.

I LIKE KNIVES, TOO. BUT SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T GET ***CLOSE ENOUGH*** TO THE FUCKING THING THAT WANTS TO KILL YOU, AND YOU HAVE TO USE A RANGED WEAPON.

IF YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON A HIGH-END ***CROSSBOW,*** THEN YOU'LL HAVE SOME FUN.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO FIND WHEN YOU ***BREAK INTO SOMEBODY'S HOUSE*** TO SCROUNGE SOMETHING UP WORTH USING.

AND YOU HAVE TO KNOW ***HOW TO USE*** WHAT YOU CAN GET.

IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE IT'D WORK AGAINST A MONSTER.

THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF MONSTERS IN THE WORLD.

TLACK

NOW FIRE.

SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU DO THINGS LIKE THIS, IT ONLY MAKES MY JOB HARDER.

I DON'T CARE IF YOUR JOB IS HARD, AARON.

MY JOB BEING HARDER MAKES ***YOUR*** JOB HARDER. IT'S THE SAME JOB. WE'RE DOING THIS TOGETHER.

I GUESS.

YOU HAVEN'T TURNED YOUR PHONE ON FOR A WEEK. I WAS WORRIED YOU MIGHT BE DEAD.

I'M NOT.

I CAN SEE THAT.

I WOULD BE SAD IF YOU WERE DEAD.

YEAH?

I WOULD.

THEY'D MAKE *YOU* ACTUALLY GO OUT AND HUNT THESE FUCKING THINGS.

I DO A PERFECTLY GOOD JOB IN THE FIELD WHEN I HAVE TO.

OKAY.

OKAY.

I JUST...I WANTED YOU TO KNOW. I WAS WORRIED. NOT FOR MYSELF. FOR *YOU.*

WHAT HAPPENED HERE, ERICA?

THERE WAS A GIRL. THERE WAS AN OSCURATYPE.

AND IT WAS A LITTLE ***BASTARD.*** IT KEPT RUNNING. NO MATTER WHAT I DID TO CORNER IT, IT KEPT RUNNING.

AND THE GIRL. SHE KEPT TELLING ME SHE HAD THE PERFECT WAY FOR ME TO FIGHT BACK.

"THE GUN SAFE HAD A ***POST-IT*** WITH THE COMBINATION FOR THE LOCK RIGHT ON THE FRONT.

"I WATCHED THIS TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO KNOWS HOW FUCKING ***LOCKERS*** WORK OPEN IT RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.

"ALL THESE RIFLES AND HANDGUNS. I TOLD HER I DIDN'T NEED ANY."

"IT SOUNDS LIKE IT COULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL."

"THEY'RE ***NEVER*** FUCKING USEFUL. NOT AGAINST OSCURATYPES."

WHAT HAPPENED?

I MEAN, I DID MY JOB. THE MONSTER HAD COME FROM HER. I WAS USING HER TO LURE IT INTO A TRAP WHERE I COULD KILL IT. IT'S WHAT I DO ***EVERY FUCKING WEEK.***

AND IT CAME. AND IT WAS STRONG. IT HAD GOTTEN FOUR KIDS ALREADY. FATTENED UP. ANGRY. FAST AND HARD TO KILL.

SO, I TRIED TO CORNER IT DOWN IN AN OLD ***QUARRY*** OUTSIDE OF TOWN. ONLY ONE WAY BACK OUT, AND I'D GET IT FROM BEHIND.

IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED IN THE ***WHITE MASKS.***

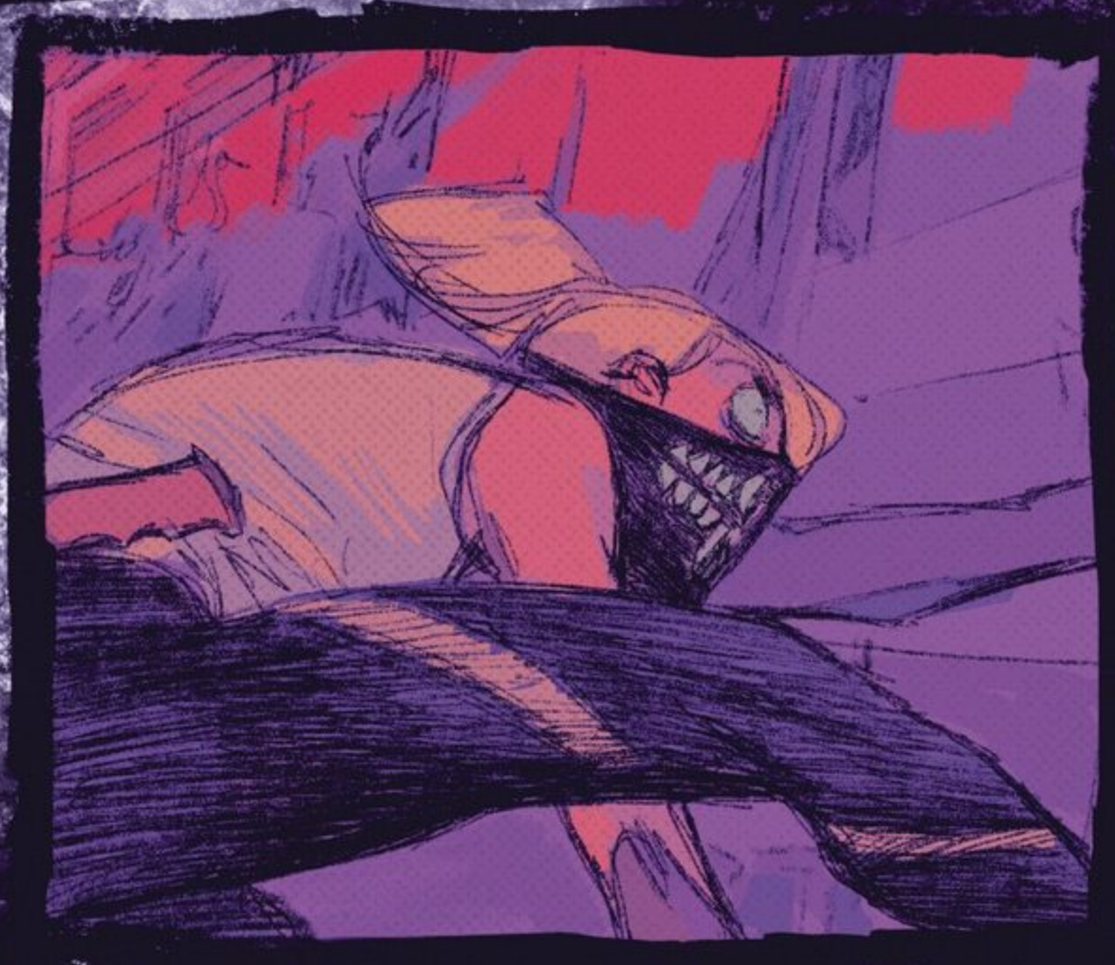
PROBABLY, YEAH.

I HATE EVER GIVING THEM CREDIT, BUT EVEN JUST ***ONE*** OTHER HUNTER WOULD HAVE MADE THIS EASY.

BUT IT ***WASN'T*** EASY. AND I WAS TIRED. AND IT GOT THE UPPER HAND. AND THAT'S WHEN I HEARD HER SHOUT OUT.

BUT THE GUN DIDN'T FIRE...SHE HADN'T TAKEN OFF THE SAFETY.

I TRIED SHOUTING AT HER...BUT SHE WAS AFRAID...THE MONSTER SAW HER. THE MONSTER ***WANTED*** HER...



AND SHE WAS FUMBLING WITH IT...TRYING TO GET IT TO WORK...

"AND THEN...IT WAS THE WORST SOUND I EVER HEARD."

NO. THIS ISN'T...

THIS ISN'T FUCKING ***USEFUL.***

IT'S OKAY.

SHE WAS STILL ALIVE FOR A MINUTE OR TWO. AND HER ***FEAR***...IT WAS TOO GOOD FOR THE OSCURATYPE TO PASS UP. IT STARTED ***EATING*** HER.

WHICH KEPT IT IN PLACE LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO DO WHAT I NEEDED TO DO.

THAT'S GOOD.

AT LEAST IT DIDN'T GET ANYONE ELSE.

IT'S ***ALL*** HORRIBLE, ERICA.

IT SHOULDN'T BE ***SO EASY*** FOR SOMEONE TO DIE.

BUT IT ALWAYS IS. SOMEHOW IT ALWAYS IS.

YOU COULD HAVE *CALLED* ME.
YOU COULD HAVE SAID THAT THIS WAS A HARD ONE, AND YOU NEEDED ME TO *COVER* FOR A FEW DAYS UNTIL YOU GOT BACK ON YOUR FEET.

YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN A *SHIT* ABOUT IT.

BUT I *STILL* WOULD HAVE COVERED FOR YOU. WHAT DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN DOING THE LAST FEW DAYS, ANYWAYS? IT'S NOT LIKE I'M GOING TO SAY I *DON'T KNOW* WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

MAYBE YOU *SHOULD.*

I WAS WORRIED YOU MAYBE...I DON'T KNOW. YOU DON'T *DRINK* LIKE SHE DID, BUT YOU GO HARD ON YOURSELF.

YOU'RE NOT AFRAID TO LET THE *DAMAGE* OF ALL OF THIS HIT YOU. WHICH IS HOW SHE WAS. YOU DON'T HURT YOURSELF HOW SHE DID...

BUT YOU *DO* HURT YOURSELF, ERICA.

I KNOW.

IT WAS HER *DAD.* THE FEAR ALWAYS COMES FROM SOMEWHERE, AND WITH THIS GIRL...IT WAS HER DAD. THAT'S WHY THE OSCURATYPE WAS SO BIG AND STRONG, I THINK.

I DON'T KNOW IF HE EVER HIT HER. BUT SHE WAS *AFRAID* OF HIM. AND SHE BELIEVED IN THE STUPID WAYS HE *PRETENDED* THAT HE WAS STRONG.

I WAS *SO ANGRY,* AARON.

"I WENT BACK TO THE HOUSE THAT NIGHT. I WAS STILL STINKING OF BLOOD AND SWEAT BUT I DIDN'T CARE. I EMPTIED THE SAFE AND I TOOK THEM BACK TO THE QUARRY.

"ONE BY ONE, I THREW THEM IN.

"BUT I TOOK THE GUN THAT SHE HAD USED...AND I WENT BACK TO THE HOUSE."

"ERICA."

"GUNS DON'T WORK WELL ON MONSTERS. NOT UNLESS YOU'RE A ***SILVER MASK*** WITH A ***SILVER BULLET,*** AND IT'S ONE OF THE FUCKERS THAT WORKS ON."

"BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF MONSTERS. JESSICA TAUGHT ME THAT."

WHAT DID YOU DO?

NOTHING. I ALMOST...

IT WOULDN'T HAVE FIXED IT. IT JUST WOULD HAVE BEEN ***MORE DEATH.*** AND I DON'T WANT TO BE THE SORT OF PERSON...

DEATH IS ***EASY ENOUGH*** WITHOUT ME. IT'S TOO EASY.

THE GIRL.

HER NAME WAS JESSICA.

THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER GIRLS OUT THERE.

I KNOW.

WHERE AM I GOING NEXT?

SOMETHING is KILLING the CHILDREN™

"ROAD STORIES"
PART FIVE

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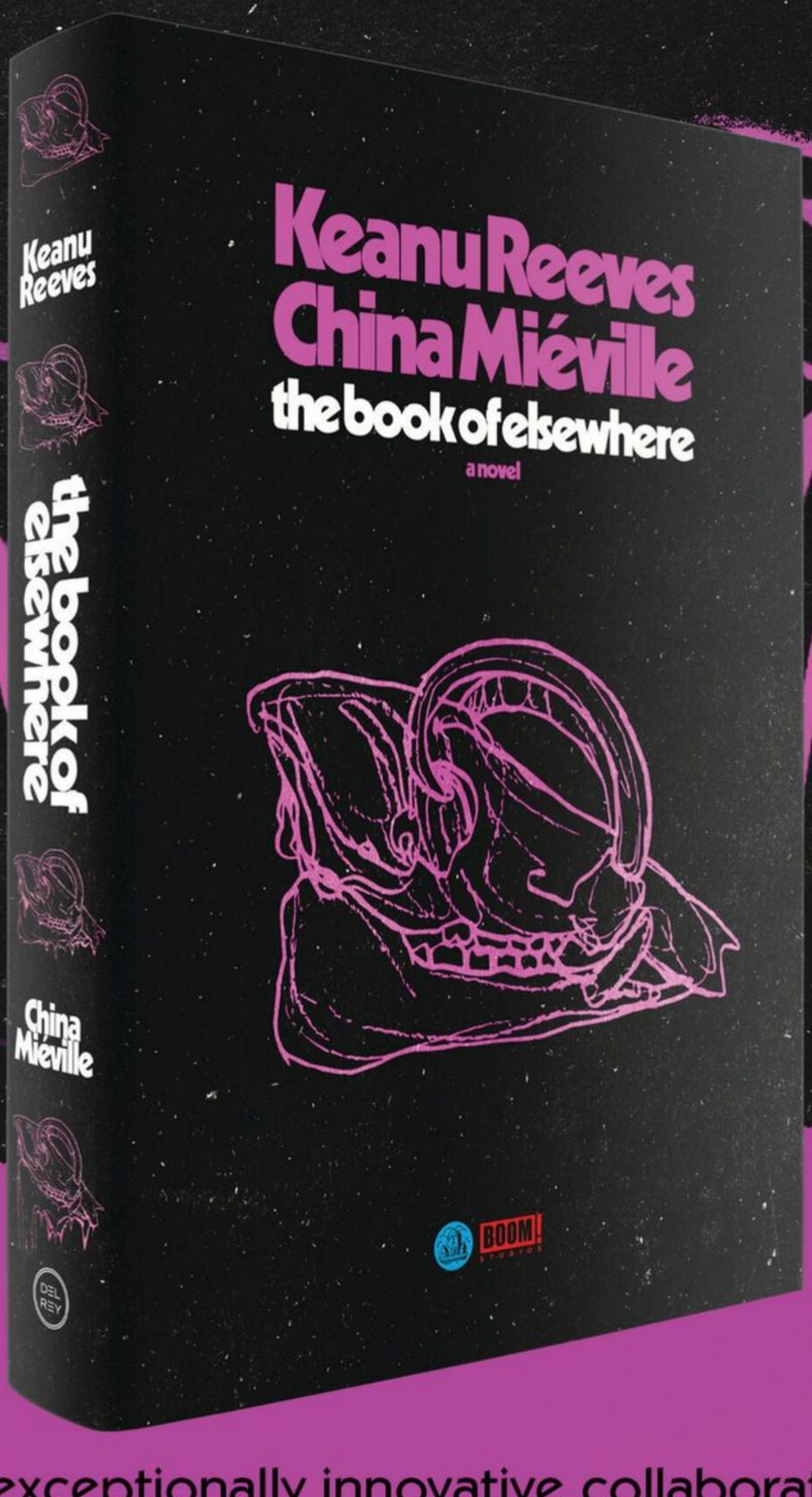

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